

the past. He has been instrumental in promoting the Volga-German heritage of Ellis County, Kansas; and he has authored a history of the Volga-German people and their immigration to Kansas, as well as a pageant play marking the centennial anniversary of these events.

When he is not volunteering his time and talents, Norbert is a successful attorney and a partner in the law firm of Dreiling, Bieker and Hoffman. Despite his many activities, his family comes first. Norbert is a devoted husband to his wife Jeannie, and a proud father of four children: January, Mark, Curtis, and Kathy.

Like his Volga-German ancestors who crossed the Kansas prairie many years ago, Norbert's hard work and strong values have made his community and our State a better place. I want tonight to thank Norbert for his many accomplishments, for his civic-minded spirit, and for his sound leadership. Despite a difference in our party affiliation, he is a friend and adviser; and I commend him for his longtime service to our great democracy.

Norbert has spent his life advocating for those in need and enabling others to overcome life's challenges. Today, Norbert himself is facing a great challenge, a personal battle with Parkinson's disease. And tonight, our prayers go out to Norbert and his family during these difficult times. May the strength and courage demonstrated in his years of service throughout his life help him fight the effects of this terrible disease.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT ON RENEWING ASSAULT WEAPONS BAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. NEUGEBAUER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MCCARTHY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MCCARTHY of New York. Mr. Speaker, at the end of this week, we all take our 6-week break before we come back to the House. That means we only have 9 days left before September 13 when we are going to see the assault weapons ban in this country expire. We have already seen where the gun manufacturers are coming out and saying they cannot wait until this expires, mainly because on September 14 they will be able to supply assault weapons back into the stores so anyone that wants to can buy them.

Mr. Speaker, since I have been here in Washington trying to fight and reduce gun violence in this country, I have always been fair. I have never tried to take away the right of someone to own a gun. But assault weapons go way overboard. Do we want to see our citizens in this country be able to have assault weapons? Assault weapons are the guns that we are seeing every day, unfortunately, in Iraq. Assault weapons are guns that are made to take down as many people as possible in the shortest period of time.

A recent poll by the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence shows that

an overwhelming amount of Americans support renewal of the ban, including gun owners around the country and NRA supporters. Voters in key Midwestern States, including Ohio, Wisconsin, Michigan, and Missouri, average 72 percent in support of the renewal. In Florida, 81 percent of likely voters support renewing the ban. In rural States, including West Virginia and South Dakota, 68 percent of voters support the renewal. The majority of gun owners in this country support the renewal, mainly because the majority of gun owners in this country are fair, and they know what kinds of guns they need and what kinds of guns we do not need.

In the face of these dramatic numbers in favor of the ban, the issue, unfortunately, remains in a political deadlock. In 2000, the President, President Bush, said that he would sign the bill if it got on his desk. Well, we know that the President has been able to get everything that he has wanted through this House by making some phone calls. It is time the President stands up. It is time the President says, we should have the assault weapons ban certainly renewed, at the least.

Listen, I support our police officers across this country. The police officers across this country want this ban kept in place. Why? Because they have found over the last 10 years fewer and fewer assault weapons are being used in crimes. Fewer and fewer assault weapons are being used to hurt our police officers across this country.

Mr. Speaker, I happen to believe very strongly that one person can make a difference. That is why I came to Congress. But I also know that it takes the American people to wake up, to be able to have their voices heard here; and this is one chance when the American people can come together.

Do not let this time run out. This is where the American people can get involved. Certainly e-mail the Speaker of the House and the President of the United States. Let us keep this promise that the President made back in 2000 a reality. Do we want assault weapons back on our streets? Do we want the possibility of terrorists that are supposedly in this country being able to buy these guns? Do we want the drug lords to be able to have these guns? Think of the shootings that we have had in this country over the last several years. Can we imagine if they had had an assault weapon and how many more people they could have taken down?

I spent my life as a nurse before I came to this great House. My job is to take care of people. My job is to prevent people from being ill, to give them the best quality of life possible. Having assault weapons is deadly for all of us. It is deadly for our children. It is deadly for our police officers. I here in Congress refuse to let this die. That is why I came to Congress, to save lives.

I am asking the American people to get behind this. When we come back in

September, over 2,000 people will have died during that time. Two thousand people. Two thousand families, not even counting how many have been wounded. I know this is personal for me, but the rhetoric that we are hearing from the NRA is false.

Ten years ago we heard constantly the only reason we wanted to get this assault weapons ban done is so we could go down that slippery road. Well, let me tell my colleagues something. Second amendment rights, the Constitution, each one of us swears that we will uphold that. I am not out here to take away anyone's right to own a gun.

Please, the American people must become involved in this.

DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Nebraska (Mr. OSBORNE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. OSBORNE. Mr. Speaker, there has been a great deal of debate lately about the definition of marriage. It seems that the position taken is determined largely by a person's world view. Some are primarily interested in what best serves adults. Issues such as health insurance benefits, Social Security benefits, survivor benefits, hospital visitation rights tend to dominate the debate. There is emphasis upon individual rights and personal freedoms.

There is resentment of those who would attempt to limit the definition of marriage. On the other hand, there are those who are primarily interested in children's welfare and long-term cultural implications as they seek to define marriage. For these people, marriage is viewed as the most basic, elemental social contract. It is the bedrock of the culture. Its primary purpose is the conception and rearing of children in a stable, long-term relationship between a man and a woman. The strength of the culture, possibly for its very survival, depends upon this process.

If one subscribes to the primacy of the importance of children, then certain facts appear to be incontrovertible. First, a man and a woman produce a child; no other arrangement seems to work very well. Second, research shows that children do better when they live with their biological father and mother in a long-term, stable relationship.

Twelve leading family scholars summarized thousands of studies on child rearing as follows: children raised by both biological parents within a marriage are less likely to become unmarried parents, live in poverty, drop out of school, have poor grades, experience health problems, die as infants, abuse drugs and alcohol, experience mental illness, commit suicide, experience sexual and verbal abuse, engage in criminal behavior. And they conclude their observations as follows: "Marriage is more than a private, emotional relationship. It is also a social good." In